

Claims

2 What is claimed is:

1. A gaming apparatus, comprising:

4 (a) a gaming table with a gaming surface having at least one
predetermined location for receiving a gaming token;

6 (b) a gaming token supporter mounted at each of the at least one
predetermined location for receiving a gaming token on the gaming surface of the
8 gaming table such that the gaming token supporter is flush with the gaming surface
and forms a gaming token receiving location; and

10 (c) a photoelectric sensor for each gaming token supporter, each
photoelectric sensor mounted to the gaming structure such that each sensor is
12 aligned with and in sensing proximity to a gaming token supporter.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the gaming token supporter forms a
14 portion of a sensor housing.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the sensor housing comprises a first board
16 having a outer edge and at least one continuous inner edge, the inner edge forming
a sensor holder, the sensor holder having dimensions such that a sensor can be
18 received by the sensor holder and the sensor holder positioned such that the
received sensor will be aligned and in sensing proximity to the gaming token
20 supporter.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the sensor is formed by one of a photo
electric sensor and a non-photo electric proximity sensor.

5. The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a decoder electrically connected
to each sensor for determining whether a gaming token is present at the gaming
token location monitored by each sensor.

6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the first board comprises a plurality of
continuous inner edges forming a plurality of holders, wherein a plurality of
lighting devices may be received by the holders

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the lighting devices are connected to the
decoder.

8. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the decoder is a microcontroller.

9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the decoder is a hard wired circuit.

10. A gaming apparatus, comprising:

(a) a gaming table with a gaming surface having at least one
predetermined location for receiving a gaming token;

(b) a photoelectric sensor for each of the at least one predetermined
location, each photoelectric sensor mounted to the gaming structure such that each
sensor is aligned with and in sensing proximity to one of the at least one
predetermined location; and

(c) a sensor housing for each sensor having a gaming token supporter,

wherein the gaming token supporter is flush mounted to the gaming surface and forms a gaming token receiving location.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a decoder electrically connected to each sensor for determining whether a gaming token is present at the gaming token location monitored by each sensor.

12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the sensor housing comprises a first board having a outer edge and at least one continuous inner edge, the inner edge forming a sensor holder, the sensor holder having dimensions such that the sensor can be received by the sensor holder.

13. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the first board comprises a plurality of continuous inner edges forming a plurality of holders, wherein a plurality of lighting devices may be received by the holders.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the lighting devices are connected to the decoder.

15. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decoder is a microcontroller.

16. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decoder is a hard wired circuit.

17. A method for playing a series of casino card games between a casino and a plurality of players, with a prize, comprising:

(a) each player placing a first wager to become a participant in the casino card game;

- (b) each player placing an entry fee to become eligible to win the prize;
- 2 (c) determining whether a player has placed the entry fee to become eligible to win the prize by using a proximity sensor device;
- 4 (d) dealing a hand of cards to each player;
- (e) resolving each player's first wager based on said hand, wherein if a
- 6 player's hand comprises a predetermined arrangement of cards, that player wins a preselected amount from the casino;
- 8 (f) resolving each player's entry fee, wherein if a player's hand comprises a narrower subset of the predetermined arrangement of cards, that player becomes a
- 10 finalist eligible to win the prize; and
- (g) playing a second game to select a winner of the prize.
- 12 18. An apparatus for playing a multi-tiered game, comprising:
 - (a) a plurality of gaming tables, each table having a plurality of player
 - 14 positions;
 - (b) wagering areas on the table, with at least one wagering area
 - 16 corresponding to each of the plurality of player positions;
 - (c) a gaming token supporter flush mounted to the gaming surface to
 - 18 form a wagering area;
 - (d) sensor means mounted to the plurality of gaming tables, wherein each
 - 20 sensor means comprises a sensor, with one of the sensors being aligned with and in sensing proximity to a wagering area;

(e) dealer control means at each table, connected to the sensor means, for
2 determining whether a gaming token is present in each of the plurality of wagering
areas, accumulating the betting information from each plurality of sensor means,
4 and entering data on winning outcomes in the multi-tiered game, wherein the
dealer control means includes means for entering a security code prior to entering
6 data on winning outcomes, a plurality of inputs, each input designating one of a
plurality of winning outcomes and one of the plurality of player positions at a
8 gaming table of the multi-tiered game; and

(f) computer means operably connected to each dealer control means for
10 continuously accumulating the betting information and winning outcome data for
the multi-tiered game, calculating a prize amount for the multi-tiered game, and
12 controlling a display means operably connected to the computer means for
displaying the prize amount for the multi-tiered game.

14 19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the plurality of gaming tables is located at
different gaming facilities.

16 20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the computer means includes a plurality
of facility computers, each facility computer operably connected to a plurality of
18 gaming tables, and a central computer operably connected to the plurality of facility
computers.

20 21. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the dealer control means, computer
means, and display means are operably connected to each other by a local network.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the display means includes an
- 2 alphanumeric LED display.